

CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

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AGENDA
September 15, 2000
Department of Transportation Building
1120 N Street, Room 1420
Sacramento, California

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|--|---|
| 12:30 p.m. | Item 1 | Approval of Agenda
(Any members who have brought questions or issues not otherwise shown on the agenda should bring them up during this part of the meeting to be sure time is made to discuss them.) | |
| 12:45 p.m. | Item 2 | Approval of Minutes from July 21, 2000 | |
| 1:00 p.m. | Item 3 | Governor's Initiative vs. Rural County Transportation Needs and Issues | J. Ferrera
C. Field |
| 2:00 p.m. | Item 4 | Caltrans Project Delivery | J. Nicholas
J. Boda
C. Field
D. Landon |
| 2:45 p.m. | Item 5 | Rural Counties and the Public Transit Account (PTA) | P. Hathaway |
| 3:00 p.m. | Item 6 | Status Reports Concerning Other Issues/Objectives/Assignments | |
| 4:00 p.m. | Adjournment | | |

**Draft
California
Rural Counties Task Force
July 21, 2000 Meeting Minutes**

Meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m.

Attendance: See attached sign-in sheet.

1. Introductions, Approval of Agenda and Announcements

Following introductions, Gene Murtey, Caltrans, announced that a recent advisory from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated that enforcement of air quality non-attainment requirements on six new rural counties (Mariposa, Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador, Nevada and Tehama) were going to be further postponed. This is apparently not true and the counties should hold to their previous schedule (completion of attainment plans, etc. by July 2001).

2. Approval of Minutes for May 19, 2000

Dan Landon made a motion to approve the minutes with one minor typographical correction. The move was seconded by Susan Morrison. The minutes were approved with no objections.

3. Legislation

Chuck Oldham informed the RCTF that if there were any technical changes to the current legislation list (project description, agency name), members are urged to contact the legislature or Debbie Motts. He stated that the legislature will be meeting again in August 7, 2000 and then breaking again on August 31, 2000. There is not a lot of time to act on current legislation so members are also urged to focus on non-controversial issues because there will not be time for large debate sessions with the legislature.

Mr. Oldham announced that Tony Harris told the commission at the workshop that Caltrans has already assigned a project manager to every project on the Governor's Transportation Initiative, and that those project managers are within the district so that it will be more efficient for local agencies to be in contact with them. The lead agencies will be contacted by the project managers to discuss projects that may need cleanup legislation. Caltrans is taking the responsibility to contact the appropriate people and see projects through quickly.

Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) and Assembly Bill 2928

Mr. Oldham explained that funding for this bill is continuously appropriated without respect to fiscal year. The money will sit there and be available to the Commission. Money in this fund is appropriated to Caltrans for allocation directed by the Commission for the projects that are identified in the bill.

The bill also defines the projects that are eligible for funding from the Traffic Congestion Relief Program. The way it works is that the project is already applied for in the bill, lead agencies must submit an application to the Commission, splitting the project into phases, showing the cost of each phase and when the project will start. Mr. Oldham informed the RCTF that if lead

agencies do not use funds in a timely manner and projects are rescinded, the funds will be returned back to the Commission for redistribution. The Commission is also required by October 4, 2000 to establish draft guidelines, and until the guidelines are adopted, the Commission cannot start to appropriate money to projects. If a project is completed at a lower than expected cost, the savings are divided among all of the funding participants and the Commission determines how much goes back into the Traffic Congestion Relief Fund (TCRF).

An annual report is given on the program by February of each year. The last program establishes a program to exchange Federal Regional Surface Transportation funds and Federal Congestion & Mitigation Air Quality funds for state funds. In addition to projects, the bill also provides money for Local Streets and Roads Rehabilitation. The bill appropriates for FY 2000/01 \$1.5 billion dollars from the General Fund to the Traffic Congestion Relief Fund, it also takes sales tax revenue at a 5% rate that results from State and Federal Gasoline taxes and deposits that into the Traffic Relief Fund. Just for this 2000/01 fiscal year it appropriates \$400 million dollars (estimated sales tax amount) to the controller for allocation to cities and counties for Local Road Rehabilitation. It also appropriates \$5 million dollars to the High Speed Rail Authority to perform their initial environmental documentation for the remaining high-speed rail service they have recommended.

Any money left in the fund after the \$169,500,000 transfer is split up; 20% to Public Transportation Account, 40% to the Governor's list of projects, and 40% to Cities and Counties (20% to Cities and 20% to counties).

Confusion in the past between the Commission and Caltrans on what was subject to Article 19 versus Revenues from the State Gas Tax that can only be used for very restricted purposes, may be addressed by the Commission in the guidelines or possibly a trailer bill, or it could just be subject to interpretation or an agreement between Caltrans and the Controller.

Chairman Field commented that with regard to the exchange money, most counties already exchange RSTP funds dollar for dollar, and this practice will not be affected. He further advised that doubling of the RPA funds has been approved along with the budget and the RCTF should thank Sharon Scherzinger, in particular, for her efforts. Chairman Field noted that SCA 3 is dead and voiced concern for the net drain of IIP funds going to other projects specifically identified in the Governor's Initiative that need matching funds in order to be completed.

Chuck noted that the Commission guaranteed (in 1998) State only funding for the first \$300 million in local road rehab projects. \$294,000 million have come through the various regional RTIPs. We have guaranteed State funding for over \$6 million. It doesn't say that we can't State Only fund more than that. The State Highway Account balance continues to be "up there", it's around \$2 billion dollars. We can afford to State Only fund more STIP local rehab projects as long as we get enough Federal delivery by Caltrans within bigger regions to cover Federal dollars. I would anticipate that on this current STIP we will continue to State Only fund local rehab projects.

Charles questioned if Caltrans still has the \$750,000 dollar project threshold under which projects will receive State only funding. Chuck answered that, yes, he didn't think the policy would change right away.

Charles stated that one thing that Pete Hathaway presented regarding the recent STIP guidelines changes was the method for identifying local rehab projects is

more flexible now. Pete Hathaway advised that the rule of thumb that the Commission will apply for local road pavement jobs is fixed cost flexible scope, meaning once you go out to open bids, if they come in low, you can add more pavement rehab on a nearby road into the contract you were going to award without a STIP amendment expanding the project scope. What's a nearby road? It means a cross street or a nearby parallel road on the same corridor. It doesn't mean another road 60 miles across the county. You can program RIP funds for local rehab in general in your RTIP and FTIP, but when you bring in a project for allocation, you had better define what you're going to do. You have to have a scope when you're asking for money, and it's against that scope that we will be measuring what to do when bids come in low and you decide to expand the contract and bring in some more bidders. Further details would be provided in the amended STIP Guidelines.

Pete noted that the STIP Guidelines are available on Caltrans' website, go to "Transportation Programming", "CTC Liaison", "CTC Agendas", and then open the book item. The attachment will be the "Draft STIP Guidelines". When staff is able to get the Guidelines out they will be mailed.

Pete Hathaway noted that Commissioner Wolf should be commended for taking the initiative to make rehab money flexible.

Charles Field asked if there were any other questions relative to the Governor's Initiative.

In regards to issues of the Governor's Initiative that affect rural counties, Pete pointed out that the "use it or lose it" deadlines are important to the big regions with big projects, they are also important if you are looking to maximize funding through the STIP. It was noted that 60% of the interregional program may not be the minimum for intercity rail. The Governor's Initiative projects will probably get an earlier and higher priority on the interregional side of the STIP. The 60% that goes to interregional projects will be programmed to a few interregional projects included in the Governor's Initiative. The remaining 40% of IIP will probably be going to urban areas to match the Governor's projects. In the last IIP, approximately 5-10% went to outside urban areas, other than that you probably won't see much funding outside urban areas until the Governor's Initiative has moved through the process.

Other issues related to the Governor's TIP include being able to swap State funds across projects inside the program. The large regions want to know whether you can take the Governor's money and move it all onto one project and off of another. Project phasing is an issue related to "use it or lose it" policy. He urged the group to study that process to identify how it could apply to other areas. One other issue to watch – if a project is on the Governor's TIP and a streamlining process is developed for approving that project, then the project goes into the STIP, can it operate pursuant to the streamlining rules of the Governor's STIP without waiving some of the STIP requirements?

4. 2000 STIP Fund Estimate and Schedule

Chairman Field surveyed how many rural counties are working on RTIP/ITIP partnerships or trying to secure some IIP money in the 2000 STIP. Tuolumne, San Benito and Lake Counties indicated that they were interested along with Alpine, Amador and Calaveras. It was noted that, to be successful, rural counties will have to be aggressive in contacting Caltrans and the Districts who are the ones to move IIP requests forward. But it was also noted that the

Governor's Initiative will make this ITIP a very political process so additional efforts beyond Caltrans' will be required.

Pete noted that Caltrans is going to be especially difficult to deal with on this issue in the next two months. The Districts have many pressures on them, including what they are going to do with all the AB1012 projects on the Interregional System that are already in the STIP without any funding for construction. Caltrans also has a new Director, and Caltrans' Strategic Plan is not fully developed.

A revised 2000 STIP Fund Estimate was circulated to the Task Force.

Discussion ensued regarding the September 29th STIP submittal and the prospect that the CTC might not give regions their shares and loan it to some other region. Pete Hathaway advised that the Commission's position is that it would be willing to reserve a prudent amount of money for a prudent amount of time and make it available for those regions that just cannot submit proposals (RTIPs) by the deadline. If an RTIP arrives by late November before we act, then the CTC is likely to accept it and include it in the STIP. If it doesn't come in until next year, then it just depends on whether other regions are wanting to borrow money.

Scott White asked if regional agencies that proposed joint funding but failed to secure it would be allowed to scramble to move that money to another project in October.

Pete responded that, yes, that is a safe assumption.

Chairman Field and Phil Dow urged the group that if you don't have your PSR's, or the planning or community level work done, you still need to complete your RTIP by the end of September and ask that your RIP money remain in reserve for the 2002 STIP (next year).

Walt Allen inquired about how a project that is in the PSR process may obtain funding in the 2000 STIP.

Mr. Hathaway explained the way the Commission has read the statute is that they must have a PSR by the time we act on the STIP. You don't have to have the PSR done by the time you submit the RTIP, but you had better be far enough along on the PSR so that its cost and schedule is pretty well known. You don't have to send in a PSR with it. You have to be able to guarantee to finish the PSR and publish it by the time that we are ready to act on the STIP, thus providing an additional two months to get the PSR completed.

Pat Weston reminded the committee that RTPAs should have been approached by your District office by now to ask you what your priorities were for developing PSR's for the 2000/2002 STIP. The Department encourages project development support only PSR's which requires only half or one quarter of the amount of time of a regular PSR.

Pete Hathaway explained the Fund Estimate adds about \$225 million to the State Highway Account, and \$265 million in available PTA money that can fall through to the STIP. Regional share estimates are probably 30% higher than what it was a few weeks ago. Some ideas for rural agencies in programming the funds include the following: 1) If you want to buy a federalized bus the PTA can match it. So you can bid the whole price of the bus in the STIP because there are some

PTA dollars available. 2) AB1012 provides the ability to program project development, including the environmental end of design of a project, to put it on the shelf. If you can't find a way with Caltrans to squeeze in the construction of a joint ITIP/RTIP project, or even an ITIP only project in your county, the fall back position is to ask Caltrans how to work AB1012 advance element to program the environmental and design of that project and put it on the shelf, then have it ready for a STIP somewhere down the line. This is a fallback strategy. It may not politically be as attractive, but it may be just as good in terms of actual final results. Once the design gets done and the project is on the shelf sitting there and staring back at you, and if the Commission is still sitting on a \$2 billion dollar heap of money in the State Highway Account, it's going to want to find a way to get those shelf projects funded one way or another.

Caltrans already has in its Interregional program, AB1012 shelf work supporting \$2 billion dollars worth of construction that is unprogrammed. It might take five or seven years to be ready, that's fine. That's why Caltrans put it in there, because they knew that the environmental studies would take that long to complete. These projects will be on the shelf a year or two from now in time for the 2002 STIP maybe, the 2004 STIP for sure. You, of course, have your own ability to use STIP funds per AB1012 for your own projects, to the extent that you are willing to start getting into working on some projects so that maybe in 2002 or 2004 you can program them and ask for allocation. We should all think about this. The AB1012 funding capacity for the upcoming fund estimate is \$120 million dollars. The regional capacity for studies and design statewide is \$350 million dollars. With a million or two each of you can do one or two environmental studies and design. Maybe you could give Caltrans a 50/50 on an ITIP project.

Dan Landon noted that those regions that have already bid PA and ED on projects that are in the process now are pretty much stuck until that goes through.

Pete agreed but added, if you have county road projects and you want it on the shelf, maybe there is some other way that that can be funded. Remember that every (AB1012) dollar that you put in does come out of your future STIP, so if you put in \$1.5 million dollars for PS&E project development now for a project your thinking about in 2005, that money has to be deducted from your next STIP share.

Walt Allen asked Pete if he had heard that the Governor was talking about changing the funding for commuter rail. Pete Hathaway indicated that for operating expenses in regards to the PTA this had not occurred, but regions could fund operations with State Transit Assistance funds.

Charles Field distributed spreadsheets from Debbie Hale for rural counties that have not spent their previously programmed STIP money and that are coming up against timely use of fund deadlines.

Discussion ensued about environmental permit streamlining.

Pete noted that environmental streamlining is a very important issue here in Sacramento, rural counties, and in Washington, D.C. TEA-21 says that there shall be environmental streamlining. Not too much of it has happened yet at the federal level, in fact they have probably regressed in the last three years rather than moved forward. The problem is that while NEPA requires a balance of what you want to build and what you want to protect based on analysis of the impacts that a project or projects will create. All of the State and Federal environmental

agencies have a single mission which is to protect and preserve whatever resources they are responsible for. They are not eager to help you find a way to build a project because then they have to work hard to figure out what to do with the impacts it has on the resources they're responsible for.

Pete Hathaway suggested 1) If the State wants to get these projects delivered, the State has to do something about environmental streamlining or it's not going to happen, 2) the problem is predominantly Federal and not so much State, and 3) we in transportation have got to get the message that we are going to have to start paying for more environmental stuff along with our transportation projects.

6. Status Report Concerning ITSP

Pat Weston, Caltrans, explained that the external advisory group asked Caltrans to identify projects within RTPs from regions around the State on which the State would be interested in partnering. Basically, it's so you have a better roadmap of where to go with your own funding programs. We took the groups ideas to higher ups and were told to wait for appropriate pending agreements. Nonetheless, we have been testing the concept within the internal group and the Commission has asked us to proceed with it. We are mapping the state, putting RTP projects on the trunk routes, high emphasis routes, testing them against the rules and objectives that are stated in the ITSP. One of the key updated areas of the ITSP was objective #3, IIP funds to improve mobility within urbanized area gateways for facilities to transfer people and goods. We have done some congestion level mapping, duration of total delay, those kinds of things and the plan is coming along slowly, but it is coming along. No indication yet from the Caltrans Director in terms of release of a document that would be the next updated ITSP. Right now we have permission to proceed with the analysis and that's where we are.

Charles asked if production of the updated ITSP is geared toward the 2002 STIP cycle?

Ms. Weston responded that no firm timeline has been established but work is continuing, including the addition of GTIP projects in the sense of looking at future STIP dollars and the IIP framework.

Charles inquired if the plan is looking at the dollars at the same time?

Pat responded that generally the projects are being run through the regular life cycle benefit cost model. It's a regular piece for the projects that are not fully funded. The projects will create a big repair against the statewide congestion map, they certainly hit those congested locations. For the most part they have incredible delay savings.

7. Rural County Input toward proposed Rule Making for Planning, ITS, and NEPA Regulations.

Sharon Sherzinger began by discussing a letter sent to Districts on July 5, 2000 stating the amount of RPA funds that you will be getting that are in addition to last year, and also to ask that if you have an amended program, to roll that money over to it so that you can begin to spend that money.

Sharon explained the funding was brought up to the \$4 million dollar level and that will carry through, and you will get \$4 million again next year. So it's not a one-time thing. It is my hope that you will be updating your RTP with it.

Charles noted that he conducted a survey to find out what rural counties were going to do with their new RPA money. We calculated from about roughly twenty respondents most of it was going into RTP updates and RTP related work. We were also able to determine that somewhere around 20 or 21 additional staff (or equivalent) would be hired. Most of that was going to be by contract. He stated that most rurals would like more PPM money as well because project delivery is a new important area of responsibility.

Charles stated that we are going to be working with Caltrans to find out who's spending their RPA and who isn't so that we have some account of it by December or January when our semi-annual reports are due. If you leave any RPA money on the table at that time, we will be firing up the discretionary program and taking RPA from rural counties who are not spending it and giving it to counties that can spend it. What that means is that if you have planning projects that you can get shelf ready, you can formally submit them with a detailed work element and some explanation. Around January or February you could be awarded some of that discretionary money from a County that cannot spend it. We don't want any RPA money left on the table at the end of the year.

Charles suggested that if you are passing RPA onto a city or county, you tell them that you will be contacting them in November or December and that you want to see that project well under way or else you're taking the money back.

Phil Dow stated that he is using the RPA for all of his own staff first before he does anything else with it just to be sure it gets spent.

Sharon Scherzinger introduced several people involved at the Federal level in environmental rule making. The first person was Dennis Scovill of the Federal Highway Administration. Brigitte Jaensch, on Sharon's staff (Caltrans), is going to be coordinating a response from the State of California as a whole to the Federal Government Office of Regulations. Sharon said they talked at the regional Caltrans coordination meeting which includes the MPO's, and now we are checking in with RCTF. She would like one person from the group to participate in developing that response. The next meeting will be on the 7th of August. The other person introduced was Denise O'Connor, from Caltrans' environmental program, and they are also reviewing this, particularly in regards to NEPA and developing recommendations for the State of California in that regards. A summary of a meeting of the Federal Highway Administration – Federal Transit Administration earlier this week in San Francisco was handed out. It was noted that rural areas of California already have planning processes pretty well in place here in the State of California because we review the Regional Transportation Plan and then the RTIP which speeds up the planning and programming process. The other area here under Planning which might be of interest to you is the 20-year horizon Air Quality and Conformity looked at for your RTP's.

Denise O'Connor stated the need to update NEPA regulations that have not been updated since 1987, incorporating TEA-21, and environmental principals. They are also doing some changing in scoping processes and the information coordination with you, other parties, and agencies. She suggested that we take a good look at the new sections on NEPA regulations.

Ms. O'Connor noted the need for tighter linkage between the planning and the programming process. You take the purpose and need of a project in a planning realm and bring it to the project realm. For example, if you did an environmental

document on your Regional Transportation Plan, if you eliminated potentially some of the alignments, then you could use that because you've already done that in your Regional Transportation Plan's environmental document prior to project planning.

Dennis Scovill said it's a verification process. It doesn't lessen the requirements of NEPA, but it does give you an opportunity where you need to make some of those decisions ahead of time. The NEPA process can now recognize it. However, the early analysis should be done with a good enough analysis to be acceptable and to be incorporated into the present NEPA process. He stressed that there is very strong encouragement to go through the proposed rule making and find out those areas that trouble you and comment on them and give just as much weight to the things that you think are positive. If you like something the way it is and don't want it to change, comment on it because someone else is probably going to comment to change it.

The comment period that was initially set for August 23, 2000 has been changed to September 23, 2000.

Kevin Rosser (Tehama County) volunteered to represent the Task Force on this subject and to participate at an August 7, 2000 meeting to give input in California's response.

Charles asked Sharon the status of FTA grants. She responded that they were under review and should not be included in OWP agreements until approved.

8. Rural County Project Delivery Resource Problems

Walt Allen explained his role on a statewide project delivery committee and one of the things that came out of that was a computer tracking program, CTIPs, and various forms of that that everyone will pretty much get a chance to play around with. Walt reviewed what various RTPAs and private consultants are doing to better track projects. He noted rural counties face a different problem, that is, we tend to have fewer projects and therefore we know about our projects but we have problems not being able to move them forward. I think that rural counties have the advantage to be close to our projects, sometimes too close. Sometimes we can't move them forward because we don't have the staff or the money. With increased Rural Planning Assistance money we have the opportunity to really shine and do a really good job in project delivery.

Charles explained that Amador County took its PPM money and hired a retired engineer from the bay area to do nothing but monitor Caltrans delivery and local delivery of projects. In the meantime, Caltrans Local Assistance, District 10 has done a great job of staffing up and giving us help. However, even with this effort we are having some city and county projects fail or come right up against deadlines.

Phil Dow explained that in District 1, Local Assistance has expanded capabilities, which is great, but the problems still create a gap between some of these small cities and our moderate size counties. Some of them are not even equipped well enough to be getting the paperwork to the level where that extra Local Assistance can take over. I think that is where we need to help because some of these cities might have a federalized project once every two to four years. You go through the process only once or twice, or the person who has done it previously doesn't work there anymore. Phil suggested small regions could combine PPM funds to hire a Federal project delivery specialist.

Darin Grossi (Tuolumne) brought up the new DBE requirements. In Tuolumne I am the county staff. I also do the RTPA work and we have to do a DBE plan for the RTPA as well as the county. You guys have to do it for your RTPA, the counties and the cities are gonna have to do it. It's such a global problem with all the new DBE requirements, it's a whole new plan that everybody has to draft to the new guidelines. It seems like there ought to be somebody to take a lead and say this is the model DBE plan, just insert name here and your ready to go.

Dan Landon noted that even Caltrans is failing to live up to its project delivery obligation pursuant to their MOUs with the regions.

Dana Cowell, Caltrans, said that at District 10 we went to pretty good lengths to get projects handled and signed off on. And that's supposed to be where we monitor the project prior to sending over the reports on a regular basis. We do interact pretty regularly on getting those PSR's done and following through with our work plan. On the subject of delivery on a rural level for local projects, I would wonder if this group would be interested on hearing the results of the AB1012 task forces. Those task forces should have their own recommendations available soon.

Dana mentioned that Caltrans is trying to offer assistance in different areas. When a particular region or local entity says that's where we need the help, that's what we should be trying to do. Another area District 10 is focused on is the environmental process. We know that that is very difficult for Caltrans at times to deal with Federal requirements, and local projects experience the same thing. In particular, District 10 is trying to meet early to identify the scope of projects and know what we are getting into and trying to get the resources to begin with. Another thing that we are trying to do is that we are finding that if we can get out and work with our partners early and make sure that the scope of the project is good, the concept is good, the schedule is good, then we have fewer problems. Laurie Barton and Local Assistance has put together a kind of checklist to make sure that we have the readiness to see a project go forward.

Thom Niesen, Caltrans District 2, further reported that they use a project-monitoring format that has a picture of each project location on it, name of county and regional transportation planning agency, and that has the milestones of the project, and how the project is proceeding. Typically, monthly or every six weeks, we have a status of projects meeting with the District Director and all of the project managers. We go over every single project that we have on the books and our own projects that we have on the state highway system. We go through what the red flags are to see if a project is in trouble or not. We try to focus on what those issues are. More recently, within our district, we are having a separate meeting for those projects that are having a problem and come up with some action for how to deal with it. The first thing that you need to have is the information, so whether you are developing or tracking the information yourself, or whether you're getting it through Caltrans Local Assistance, you have to have that piece first. I think that we are getting there. The second thing is what you do with that information. Sounds like you need to ultimately elevate it to the LTC if you are not having results at the local level.

It was noted that, to a certain extent, rural RTAs must become project managers. For instance, Caltrans administration has said that for all the GTIP projects, Caltrans is going to designate a project manager. Some of our first reactions was that we have very little to do with that transit provider or a city somewhere that's being a project sponsor. Typically RTPAs don't have project managers

overseeing those types of things. We may change the term of project manager, in this case, to project coordinator or something, but it's what you're describing and the role that you often play is that you're not necessarily in charge as the project manager, but you are at least coordinating activities to ensure that they are getting done.

Charles spoke to the need to go beyond project management, it's project assistance, and facilitation.

Charles suggested that ultimately, an increase to 5% or 10% PPM or unlimited PPM for rurals may be needed because of this problem. We don't have the staff that some of the urban RTPA's and GTIP partnerships have to do delivery. So maybe we should be entitled to use a little more of our STIP dollars for PPM.

Dan Landon requested how many of us are having problems with local agencies that are not able to get the projects out? By a show of hands it was at least half of the rural counties represented.

Phil identified statistics as to how many rural projects have requested an extension of time. That's a clear indicator.

Laurie Barton, Caltrans, discussed the enhanced assistance concept in regards to consultants or Caltrans facilitating progress.

It was decided the project delivery discussion would be continued to another meeting, possibly a special workshop.

9. Caltrans FTA 5311 Program

Laquita Johnson, the chief of the office of Federal Transit Assistance, began discussion on the program timelines for the next grant cycle which would be #19.

Laquita suggested projects coming in the end of November with Caltrans submitting the grant application sometime in December.

It was noted that RTIPs should program vehicle acquisition.

Laquita noted that once an application is submitted, it may be six months before its approval.

The group decided that a grant application workshop is needed even though the program hasn't changed very much.

10. Status Reports Concerning Other Issues / Objectives / and Assignments

Susan Morrison discussed the Governor's failure thus far to appoint a CTC representative from a rural county.

Charles discussed the need for gas tax formulas to be looked at with Deanne Baker in regards to fairness to rural counties. Walt Allen volunteered his help on the topic.

Charles thanked everybody for their support of increases in RPA and it was noted that a bill to allow 5% or more of STIP funds for PPM may move forward in December.

Susan Morrison reported that the 5310 scoring list is out, however, some revised scoring is necessary.

Susan also noted the FTA is telling her they won't be doing a ridged competitive program. If you have a project in the JARC (Job Access and Reverse Commute) program, get on the horn with your U.S. Congressman, talk to them and lobby for your project.

Dan Landon noted that Nevada County put \$2,000.00 in their work program for dues for the Rural Counties Task Force and he hopes that everyone else did the same.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

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September 7, 2000

John Ferrera, Assistant Secretary
State of California
Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
801 K Street, Suite 1918
Sacramento, CA 95814-3520

Dear Mr. Ferrera:

This letter is intended to follow-up my phone calls inviting you to attend the Rural Counties Task Force meeting on Friday, September 15, 2000. The Task Force is made up of representatives from the State's 26 rural Regional Transportation Planning Agencies.

As you know, many rural counties have been grumbling about being left out of the Governor's Transportation Initiative. The Rural Counties Task Force does, however, recognize that the Governor did begin to address rural county transportation needs within the context of a more pressing statewide issue, urban traffic congestion relief.

The Rural Counties Task Force would look forward to the opportunity to begin a dialogue with you concerning this subject at their meeting on September 15, 2000. Enclosed is a copy of the RCTF agenda, my memo to the Task Force participants, a list of Rural County Task Force Discussion Points concerning this subject, and a list of the Task Force participants.

Please do all you can to attend our meeting on September 15, 2000. I personally feel it is important to "compare notes" at this time since the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) has also invited both of us to make presentations during their annual meeting in Rohnert Park on September 21, 2000.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Field
Chairman

cc w/enc: Kathie Jacobs, CTC

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TUOLUMNE CO/CITIES AREA PLAN. COUNCIL
(209) 533-5601

September 7, 2000

TO: Rural Counties Task Force Participants

FROM: Charles F. Field, Chairman

SUBJECT: Governor's Initiative vs. Rural County Needs & Issues

I have invited John Ferrera, Assistant Secretary at the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency to attend the Rural Counties Task Force meeting on September 15, 2000. I have asked him to participate with us in a discussion of the Governor's statewide vision for transportation in comparison to rural county transportation needs and issues. Mr. Ferrera's office has confirmed that he will try to attend..

On July 19, 2000 Mr. Ferrera told the CTC that Governor Davis worked hard to ensure that rural counties were given the same level of benefits through the Governor's Initiative as that which has been provided to urban areas. Following the meeting, Phil Dow and I advised him that the rural counties did not necessarily share this same perspective. At that time Mr. Ferrera agreed that we should begin to communicate more clearly on this subject.

Enclosed with this memo please find a list titled "Rural Counties Task Force Discussion Points Concerning Governor's Transportation Program". It is intended that this list serve as a starting point for productive communications between the Governor's representatives and the State's rural cities and counties concerning transportation issues.

CF/nc

DRAFT

Rural Counties Task Force

Discussion Points Concerning Governor's Transportation Program

September 9, 2000

Special Note: *Items in italics have not yet been discussed or agreed upon by members of the Rural Counties Task Force.*

1. Local road rehabilitation and maintenance funding remains inadequate despite positive steps taken by the recent Governor's Initiative. Based on the Rural Counties Task Force local road rehabilitation funding needs survey that was conducted in February, 1999, the one-time cost to bring the State's rural county roads back up to "good" condition is approximately \$1 billion. To keep these roads in good condition from that point forward it will cost more than \$50 million per year. These survey results are consistent with the statewide SR 8 survey which indicated \$10.5 billion is needed for rural and urban city and county streets and roads and a minimum \$400 million per year. The Governor's Initiative provided \$400 million one-time and an estimated \$120 million in the subsequent five years which must be shared by all cities and counties statewide. The rural city and county apportionments from this total will meet less than 2% of rural county needs.
2. Allocation formulas for street and roads funding continue to be tilted toward urban areas (this involves the current gas tax formula which is also being used to distribute street and road funds under the Governor's Initiative). Walt Allen (San Benito County) is working with DeAnn Baker (CSAC/CEAC) in efforts to quantify the difference between the current gas tax formula and other formulas that have been put forth that would be more fair to rural cities and counties.
3. The Governor's Initiative threatens full funding and completion of highway projects in rural counties. The Governor's projects will require massive resources from Caltrans and other agencies (public and private). It appears that many projects in the program will face serious obstacles including funding shortfalls, lack of local community consensus, Federal environmental resource agency approvals, etc. The rural counties are concerned that the net affect is that it may start robbing resources needed to deliver rural highway projects funded through the STIP.
4. Several rural counties (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Lake, San Benito, and Tuolumne) are trying to put IIP funding partnerships together and fear that the Governor and Caltrans intend that all available IIP funds will be used to fund projects within the Governor's Initiative. Rural counties need some incentive to work together, to leverage other funds, to save regional STIP fund shares from multiple STIP cycles, and to take other steps necessary to fund major state highway project needs in their regions. Caltrans and the Governor are seeking partnerships whereby urban regions will contribute some of their much larger regional shares (RIP funds) to projects that are desired by the State. The rural counties need a similar, though much less expensive, program if they are to be encouraged to partner with the State on highway projects in rural areas as well.

5. Substantial additional funding for capital improvements such as that which could have been provided through SCA 3 or ACA 24 is still needed in rural areas if we are going to maintain safe and adequate transportation systems according to the long-range needs identified in our Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs). All rural counties in the State are required to develop RTPs. These RTPs must identify “financially realistic” as well as “financially constrained” lists of needed transportation projects. More and more rural counties are finding out that they will not be able to obtain the “realistic” funding needed over the life of their 20-year plans to fund the projects that are needed to maintain safe and adequate countywide transportation systems. More and more rural counties are therefore sharing with their urban counterparts the need for some substantial new source of transportation funding. Most rural counties cannot expect to fund sales tax measures by the currently required 2/3 majority vote.
6. Rural counties need a representative on the CTC. The RCTF is aware that two positions are available on the CTC. The RCTF has encouraged the Governor to maintain at least one member on the CTC who is from one of the State’s smaller rural counties. At least two rural county representatives have applied for the available positions. A rural county representative on the CTC will further help efforts to ensure communication and cooperation between the CTC, the Governor’s administration, Caltrans, and the State’s 26 rural counties.
7. Streamlining Federal requirements and improving Caltrans Local Assistance still has a long way to go. Caltrans Local Assistance program has been improved by recent increases in Caltrans’ budget. Federal requirements (especially those put forth by Federal resource agencies) need to be adjusted so that they are able to compromise and work toward solutions with lead agencies for transportation projects. Right now Federal resource agencies are seriously stalling delivery of important transportation projects.
8. Rural counties need to improve their local project delivery capability so that they can take maximum advantage of increased transportation funding that may become available from the State and/or Federal government. Rural counties are, in general, suffering from lack of resources to deal with Caltrans procedures and Federal requirements affecting improvements to bridges, roads, or other projects on our local road systems. In many rural counties, Caltrans or private firms are hiring away our experienced personnel. Finding qualified replacements is difficult or impossible.
9. An increase to STIP Project Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM) funds is needed to help rural counties go beyond project monitoring and to improve our project delivery dilemma. The rural counties are tremendously thankful for the new administration’s efforts that helped to achieve a doubling of Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) funds within the Caltrans budget. This doubling of planning funds is not enough to fully meet our needs however. During the next legislative session, the Rural Counties Task Force intends to request special legislation to increase the 2% allowance of STIP for PPM to 5%, 10%, or to an unlimited amount. The Governor will be urged to help support and sign this legislation.
10. *Proposition 35 or some similar method whereby project delivery work for State highway projects can be contracted to private consultants is necessary in order to improve project delivery. The current administration seems convinced that*

Caltrans can deliver the current backlog of STIP projects as well as those identified in the Governor's Initiative on schedule. Past experience suggests that Caltrans will not be able to deliver all needed State highway transportation projects on schedule. The surplus in unspent but obligated transportation funds could, then, grow beyond its current \$2 billion level. Regions need to be given the authority to have their RIP funded State highway projects contracted out to private consultants in order to keep STIP funded projects on schedule if necessary.

11. *Jobs-Housing Balance and Smart Growth have become popular topics, however, nothing is being done in the legislative world to see that the concept is implemented. It is possible to look at the Governor's Initiative as rewarding those communities in the State who have prospered under the improved economy, yet they have not provided a jobs, housing balance over the past 20 or more years. Projections for growth in Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties over the next 20 years indicate that they will become the State's next major urbanized areas (then competing with LA and the Bay Area). There is valid concern that the foothill counties will then become bedroom communities serving these valley counties. Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne Counties participated in a "Valley to Foothill Intermodal Sub-Area Study" in 1995 which shows that levels of service E and F will occur on highways that connect us to the valley (SR 108, SR 4, SR 12, SR 26 SR 88, etc.). Regional Transportation Plan Financial Elements for both the valley and foothill counties indicate that the funding will not be available to relieve this situation. The State should consider taking a lead role to insure that infrastructure and housing keeps pace with growth in the Central Valley and that we don't create another jobs-housing balance crisis over the next 20 years.*
12. *A State transportation plan update that includes the State's transportation vision and priority transportation needs should be adopted. All of the State's Regional Transportation Planning Agencies are required to prepare Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and to update them regularly in order to justify requests for State and Federal transportation funds. The State's transportation plan is recognized as being vague and subject to broad interpretation. It does not presently provide a clear picture of where State and Federal transportation funds should be invested. An update of the statewide transportation plan should include an attempt to correlate with RTPs from each region and it should include an element concerning maintenance of the State's city and county local road systems. Development of an upgraded statewide transportation plan can help clarify the current administration's transportation investment strategy, ensure that investments are being made where they are most needed, and help remove politics and animosity from the program.*

CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

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September 7, 2000

TO: Rural Counties Task Force Participants
FROM: Charles F. Field, Chairman
SUBJECT: Caltrans Project Delivery

During the last RCTF meeting on July 21, 2000, it was agreed that we should hold a discussion of Caltrans project delivery during our next Task Force meeting, September 15, 2000. I have invited Jim Nicholas, Program Manager/Transportation Programming, and Jack Boda, Project Management Program, to attend the meeting on September 15, 2000 and participate in this discussion. It is anticipated that Dan Landon will share with the group some concerns that he has for several Caltrans projects in Nevada County. Likewise, George Dondero and I will share concerns that we have for Caltrans delivery of several RIP funded projects in Amador and Calaveras Counties. If any other rural counties have concerns for Caltrans delivery of RIP funded State highway projects, please bring these to the meeting for the discussion.

CF/nc

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September 7, 2000

TO: Rural County Task Force Participants
FROM: Charles F. Field, Chairman
SUBJECT: Rural Counties and the Public Transit Account (PTA)

During the last Task Force meeting on July 21, 2000, CTC Deputy Director Pete Hathaway mentioned that rural counties may be able to access Public Transit Account (PTA) funds through the STIP for bus purchases. It may be too late for many counties to include new bus purchases in the 2000 STIP since 2000 RTIPs are due by the end of this month. I have, nonetheless, asked Pete to attend the Task Force meeting to help further explain how this funding opportunity can be utilized by rural counties.

CF/nc

RCTF ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES
Reports for September 15, 2000

<u>ISSUE/OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
CTC Representative	Susan Morrison	No Report*
Local Road Rehab Funding & STIP Protection (Gov.'s Initiative)	Celia McAdam	See Agenda
Formulas for Distribution of Local Road Funds	Walt Allen	No Report*
Increase PPM Funds	Dan Landon	Verbal
Clarify/Improve OWP Process	Charles Field	No Report *
Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP)	Darin Grossi	No Report *
HBRR/HES Exchange and Federal Aid Project Streamlining	Matt Boyer	No Report *
SB 45 Project Monitoring/Reporting Database	Walt Allen	No Report *
Local Assistance "Enhanced Training Committee"	Walt Allen	No Report *
City/County/Caltrans FHWA Coordinating Group	Spencer Clifton	No Report *
Committee to Review Changes to Local Assistance Procedures and Guidelines Manuals	Liz Gillingwater	Verbal
RSTP/CMAQ/TEA Project Delivery Committee	Dan Landon	No Report*
RTP/RTIP Rural County Performance Measures	Dan Landon	Verbal
Caltrans Regional Planning and Programming Coordination Committee	---	No Report *
California Transportation Investment Strategy (CTIS)	George Dondero	No Report *
2000 RCTF Biannual Meeting	Phil Dow	No Report *
Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Applicability to Rural Counties	Phil Dow	No Report *
FTA 5310 and Welfare to Work Advisory Committee	Susan Morrison	No Report *
TEA Advisory Committee	Phil Dow	No Report *
California Aviation System Plan Steering Committee	Dan Landon	No Report *
State's Role in Mass Transportation Advisory Committee	Phil Dow	No Report *
State Planning Guidelines Development Quality Team	Charles Field	Verbal
Garvee Bonds Guidelines Committee	Scott Maas	No Report*
Civil Rights Review Title 9	Celia McAdam	No Report*
RCTF Dues	Dan Landon	Verbal

*Verbal reports or discussion of any item listed may occur during the meeting regardless of whether or not a written report is included with this agenda packet.